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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5255
INFO RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 8193
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 7314
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 2850
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 5781
RUEHKF/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 9016
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 4867
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 3570
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHWSMRC/USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 000745

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SUBJECT: ZARDARI EXAMINING A COALITION WITH NAWAZ SHARIF

REF: (A) ISLAMABAD 226 (B) 07 ISLAMABAD 4997 (C)

LAHORE 84

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson, for reasons 1.4 (b)(d)

1. (C) Summary: In the wake of the losses suffered by Musharraf's Pakistan Muslim League (PML) and the religious parties, scenarios for Bhutto widower Zardari described the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) as supporting a government of "national unity," but he is leaning toward

2. (C) Zardari fears the GOP ("the agencies") will attempt to split the PPP by backing Amin Faheem, who Zardari does not want to become Zardari candidly said he knew he had to deal with Musharraf because of Musharraf's influence with the military and his own lack of credibility

3. (C) Ambassador met alone with Bhutto widower and party head Asif Zardari February 20 for ninety minutes to discuss his plans for the PPP

4. (C) Zardari had met February 19 with NSA Tariq Aziz and DG ISI General Nadeem Taj about the formation of the government. Zardari said Ambassador asked about Nawaz Sharif's desire to unseat Musharraf. Ambassador said the Embassy had good relations with Nawaz and his party, This strategy would not solve Pakistan's critical economic challenges and the insurgency.

5. (C) Zardari said he would not accept Sharif's public conditions. If Nawaz joined the PPP coalition, Zardari planned to meet Nawaz's delegation

6. (C) Another option, Zardari mused, was to give the PM post to the ANP leader, Asfandiyar Wali Khan, who could be a compromise candidate. ISLAMABAD 00000745 002 OF 002

recreation." Benazir was fond of him and he was loyal, Zardari recounted, but Faheem was incompetent. Zardari described Faheem as "not

7. (C) Ambassador asked Zardari about rumors that he planned to put his sister Azra Pechuho - a respected physician with a reserved seat in

8. (C) Zardari said he was trying to convince Musharraf's advisors that Nawaz would be better off "inside the tent" than outside. He said

9. (C) Comment: Zardari is far less emotional than his late wife. He seems both ruthless and practical but his political skills have not PATTERSON